
Promising Practice Fact Sheet – Strengthening Families

The Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP)

Program

Description: This is a research-based and validated early childhood literacy and school readiness program that strengthens families and prepares children for academic success through intensive home visiting. A “program year” consists of a minimum of 46 home visits: two 30 minute home visits per week for 23 weeks. PCHP operates in 14 states, including California, Florida, and Washington (Seattle and Yakima only).

Target Population: Children, mainly two to three years old, likely to have a school-preparedness gap due to factors such as family poverty, parents’ education level, and new immigrants

Goals:

- Early literacy
- Increased school readiness
- Enhanced social-emotional development
- Strengthen parent-child relationship

Caseload Data: Each home visitor works with 11 to 14 families, depending on number of hours worked/week.

Cost: Neighborhood House in Seattle estimates they spend about \$4,000 per family per year. The national PCHP estimates an average of approximately \$5,000 per family per year nationwide. Services and costs are not billed to Medicaid.

Evidence:

- Research data dates back to the program’s inception, 1965;
- California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare identified PCHP as a promising practice for home visiting;
- Congressional Research Service has studied the program; and
- Children's Trust Research Advisory Group identified PCHP as having "Good Support".

Assessment: Family assessments are conducted by paraprofessionals (called “Home Visitors”) trained by Parent-Child Home Program Coordinators. The Coordinators are trained by the national PCHP office.

Operating in Washington:

- Neighborhood House operates one of three PCHPs in Seattle. It serves 110 families in three sites - Rainier Vista, New Holly, and Yesler Terrace. This PCHP targets low-income refugees and immigrants speaking 13 languages who live in King County with children two years of age. All services are provided in the client’s first language. The program reports it cannot meet all requests for service but there is no waitlist because the demand for services is so great. It does not advertise PCHP because requests for services already exceed capacity from word of mouth referrals alone.

Annual operating budget is approximately \$450,000. It received a start-up grant from the City of Seattle and BPEL (Business Partnership for Early Learning: a coalition of King County businesses (such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Safeco, and Boeing Company)

committed to investing resources to promote early learning to ensure children reach their full potential in the classroom). Funding also comes from grants from the Council for Children and Families and the United Way.

- The other two sites in Seattle are operated by Atlantic Street (serving 80 families of color who reside in central and southeast Seattle) and Southwest Youth and Family Center (serving about 40 Arabic, English, Somali, and Spanish-speaking families).
- The Highland School District and West Valley School District operate PCHP in Yakima.

Description of Services:

- The national PCHP trains home coordinators who then train home visitors.
- Home visitors receive training in multicultural awareness and the ethics of home visiting.
- Home visitors come from the community. Most have a high school diploma or GED and some have a bachelor's degree in social work, education, or nursing, etc.
- About one-third of former PCHP recipients become home visitors per a 2003 study. Neighborhood house provides a lot of extra support to help parents become home visitors.
- Home visitors use carefully-selected books and educational toys to model verbal interaction, reading and play activities, and promote school readiness.
- Curricular materials, quality children's books, and educational toys are given to the families on a weekly basis. Over the course of the program, families acquire educational toys and a library of children's books.

Eligibility:

- Parents who are low-income, have limited education, and have language or literacy barriers. One PCHP, Neighborhood House, estimates 80% of its families are at or below 200% FPL.
- Generally for a child between two and three years old, although a child can start as young as 16 months and stay as late as four years old.

Findings:

- Indiana University of Pennsylvania's independent evaluation of Parent-Child Home Programs in two Pennsylvania counties indicates that positive parenting behaviors increased dramatically as a result of program participation:
 - Half of the children identified as "at risk" in their home at the start were found to be no longer at risk at the completion of the program.
 - The number of positive interactions between parent and child increased significantly during program participation, including instances of praise and/or encouragement observed by researchers.
- The PCHP utilizes a model of early intervention and remediation that can result in long-term savings by increasing school readiness and reducing the need for school-age special education. An independent study, conducted by the City of New York Office of the Comptroller, calculates savings from the reduced need for special education services for Parent-Child Home Program graduates at \$210,000 per child.
- Participating in home visiting programs yields long-term economic benefits. An independent report produced by the City of New York Office of the Comptroller estimates that participation in the Parent-Child Home Program could increase a participant's lifetime earnings potential by between \$600,000 and \$1 million dollars.
- Another independent study of the job creation and earnings creation effects of the Parent-Child Home Program shows that the Program increases state residents' earnings by 5.66%.
- A study estimates that if the PCHP was implemented nationally the long-term annual effects (by 2088) on the economy would be: 300,000 jobs, \$53 billion in generated earnings, \$42 billion in annual government revenue.
- PCHP has a high ratio of increasing family earnings to net program costs because it achieves a high rate of high school graduation at a relatively low two-year program cost per child (approximately \$4500).

Implications for Policymakers and Program Developers to Consider:

- Early education investments yield a return that exceeds the return of most public projects that are considered economic development.
- Home visits by a community member are crucial to the success of PCHP.

Contacts:

- Marcy Miller, Home Visiting Program, Neighborhood House, 206-461-8430; marcym@NHWA.ORG
- Nancy Ashley, PCHP national representative to Washington;
- Business Partnerships for Early Learning (BPEL);
- Annie Soustek, PCHP, Southwest Youth and Family Center, Seattle, 206-937-7680, www.swyfs.org;
- Edith C. Elion, Director, Atlantic Street Center, Seattle, (206) 329-2050, www.atlanticstreet.org;
- www.parent-child.org;
- Recommended by Seth Chamberlain and Lauren Supplee from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHS), as best or promising home visiting services.
- Recommended by California Evidence-based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare as a program with “a Scientific Rating of 3 – Promising Research Evidence.”

Resources:

- Child Trends, “What Works for Home Visiting Programs,” 7/27/2010 www.childtrends.org;
- California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare, www.cebc4cw.org/search/topical-area/18;
- Literature reviews and meta-analyses by Sweet, M.A. and Applebaum, M.I. (*Home Visiting Best Practices: A Review of the Literature, May 2007* - www.birth-beyond.com/ and Deanna Gomby (*Home Visitation in 2005: Outcomes for Children and Parents* – www.ced.org/projects/kids.shtml/#new)
- Kimberly S. Howard and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn in “The Future of Children” latest issue; (Journal Issue: Preventing Child Maltreatment Volume 19 Number 2 Fall 2009) <http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/journals/article/index.xml?journalid=71&articleid=514>
- Congressional Research Service report Home Visitation for Families with Young Children by Karen E. Lynch & Emilie Stoltzfus, 10/23/2009 www.preventchildabusesb.org/CRSHomeVisitReportOct2009.pdf
- Washington Department of Health Home Visit Needs Assessment <http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/hvna/needassessdraft/default.htm>.